



Consular Newsletter
Consulate General of the United States
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
January – February 2011

Consular Report of Birth Abroad

The Department of State has announced the introduction of a redesigned Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA, or Form FS-240). The redesigned CRBA, which is an official record confirming that a child born abroad to a U.S. citizen parent or parents acquired U.S. citizenship at birth and serves as proof of citizenship, has been updated with a variety of state-of-the-art security features to help prevent fraud and identity theft.

After January 18, 2011, overseas posts will still document the citizenship of children born overseas to U.S.-citizen parents, but the CRBAs will be printed at our passport agencies in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and New Orleans, Louisiana, using the information provided by overseas posts. By centralizing production and eliminating the distribution of controlled blank stock throughout the world, we will help ensure uniform quality and lessen the possibility of fraud. Additionally, the Department will no longer issue the DS-1350 Certification of Report of Birth Abroad. Instead, the Department will simply provide new FS-240s in response to requests for additional, replacement, or amended CRBAs.

In order to upgrade our systems for this change, the Consulate General is suspending CRBA adjudication from January 1 through January 18, 2011. CRBA applications submitted during that time will be adjudicated after January 18.

Chicago Military and Overseas Voters, Register and Request your ballot for the Upcoming Election

On February 22, 2011, the City of Chicago will conduct its Municipal General Election. Voters will cast ballots to elect the following:

- Mayor
- City Clerk
- City Treasurer
- Alderman in each of the City's 50 Wards
- Any local referenda questions that qualify for the ballot

Register to Vote and Request Your Ballot Now! To vote in this election you must submit a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) in January of 2011. You will not get a ballot automatically, even if you voted in the November 2, 2010 general election. Note: In Illinois, no witness or notary is necessary for the FPCA application.

To check your registration status, visit: www.chicagoelections.com/voterinfo.php

Monday, January 24, 2011 is the deadline to register to vote for this Election. Go to FVAP.gov and get started! It only takes a few minutes. Alternately you may obtain an FPCA from your unit or installation voting assistance officer and at U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide, but you must follow the Illinois instructions given at FVAP.gov when completing this form. Indicate on the FPCA how you would like to

receive your absentee ballot, mail, email, or fax.

If you are in the military or if you are already registered to vote, the deadline for submitting an FPCA is 10 days before the election: Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011.

Although Illinois allows you to email or fax the FPCA, you must also submit it by mail.

If you choose to email your FPCA, you should send the form as a signed, scanned attachment. Email directly to the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners at fpca@chicagoelections.com.

If you choose to fax your FPCA, fax the form directly to the Chicago City Board of Election Commissioners at 312-263-3649. You may also use the DoD Electronic Transmission Service to fax your FPCA toll-free. To use the Electronic Transmission Service, use the cover sheet available in the Voting Assistance Guide or at FVAP.gov, and fax to: (703)-693-5527, DSN 223-5527, or toll-free from the U.S., Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands to 1-800-368-8683. International toll-free numbers can be found at FVAP.gov.

Mail your FPCA to:

Chicago City Board of Election Commissioners
69 W. Washington, Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60602

Download Your Ballot : Ballots will be mailed and emailed starting on January 8, 2011.

Vote Your Ballot: The voted ballot must be sent or **postmarked by Feb. 21, 2011** and received by March 8 in order to be counted. You must return the voted ballot and signed affidavit by mail or by sending it via a licensed motor carrier such as Federal Express, UPS or DSL. Civilians residing outside the U.S.: Contact your closest U.S. Embassy or consulate for specific instructions on how voted ballots, with proper domestic postage attached, can be returned to the United States from any U.S. embassy or consulate. To locate your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, visit <http://www.usembassy.gov/>.

To check the status of your absentee ballot visit:
www.chicagoelections.com/voterinfo.php?language_type=en.

Updated Tax Information for U.S. Citizens Abroad

If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, the rules for filing income, estate, and gift tax returns and paying estimated tax are generally the same whether you are in the United States or abroad. Your worldwide income is subject to U.S. income tax, regardless of where you reside.

When to File:

The Internal Revenue Service opened the 2011 tax filing season by announcing that taxpayers have until **April 18, 2011** to file their tax returns. The IRS reminded taxpayers impacted by recent tax law changes that using e-file is the best way to ensure accurate tax returns and get faster refunds.

Taxpayers will have until Monday, April 18 to file their 2010 tax returns and pay any tax due because Emancipation Day, a holiday observed in the District of Columbia, falls this year on Friday, April 15. By law, District of Columbia holidays impact tax deadlines in the same way that federal holidays do; therefore, all taxpayers will have three extra days to file this year. Taxpayers requesting an extension will have until Oct. 17 to file their 2010 tax returns

If you reside overseas, or are in the military on duty outside the U.S., you are allowed an automatic 2-month extension to file your return until June 15. However, any tax due must be paid by the original return due

date (April 18 this year only) to avoid interest charges.

If you are unable to file your return by the due date, you can request an additional extension to October 17 by filing Form 4868 before the return due date. However, any payments made after June 15 would be subject to both interest charges and failure to pay penalties.

Where to File: If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien (Green Card Holder), and you live in a foreign country or you are a non resident alien, mail your U.S. tax return to:

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service Center
Austin, TX 73301-0215

Estimated tax payments should be mailed with form 1040-ES to:

Internal Revenue Service
P.O. Box 660406
Dallas, TX 75266-0406
USA

For most taxpayers, the 2011 tax filing season starts on schedule. However, **tax law changes enacted by Congress and signed by President Obama in December mean some people need to wait until mid- to late February to file their tax returns in order to give the IRS time to reprogram its processing systems.**

Some taxpayers – including those who itemize deductions on Form 1040 Schedule A – will need to wait to file. This includes taxpayers impacted by any of three tax provisions that expired at the end of 2009 and were renewed by the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act Of 2010 enacted Dec. 17. Those who need to wait to file include:

- Taxpayers Claiming Itemized Deductions on Schedule A. Itemized deductions include mortgage interest, charitable deductions, medical and dental expenses as well as state and local taxes. In addition, itemized deductions include the state and local general sales tax deduction that was also extended and which primarily benefits people living in areas without state and local income taxes. Because of late Congressional action to enact tax law changes, anyone who itemizes and files a Schedule A will need to wait to file until mid- to late February.
- Taxpayers Claiming the Higher Education Tuition and Fees Deduction. This deduction for parents and students – covering up to \$4,000 of tuition and fees paid to a post-secondary institution – is claimed on Form 8917. However, the IRS emphasized that there will be no delays for millions of parents and students who claim other education credits, including the American Opportunity Tax Credit extended last month and the Lifetime Learning Credit.
- Taxpayers Claiming the Educator Expense Deduction. This deduction is for kindergarten through grade 12 educators with out-of-pocket classroom expenses of up to \$250. The educator expense deduction is claimed on Form 1040, Line 23 and Form 1040A, Line 16.

In addition to extending those tax deductions for 2010, the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act also extended those deductions for 2011 and a number of other tax deductions and credits for 2011 and 2012 such as the American Opportunity Tax Credit and the modified Child Tax Credit, which help families pay for college and other child-related expenses. The Act also provides various job creation and investment incentives including 100 percent expensing and a two-percent payroll tax reduction for 2011. Those changes have no effect on the 2011 filing season.

The IRS will announce a specific date in the near future when it can start processing tax returns impacted by the recent tax law changes. In the interim, taxpayers affected by these tax law changes can start working on their tax returns, but they should not submit their returns until IRS systems are ready to process the new

tax law changes. Additional information will be available at www.irs.gov.

For taxpayers who must wait before filing, the delay affects both paper filers and electronic filers. The IRS urges taxpayers to use e-file instead of paper tax forms to minimize confusion over the recent tax law changes and ensure accurate tax returns.

For complete information and downloadable forms, please visit the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov>. The Internal Revenue Service recently announced the availability of expanded Twitter feeds to share timely information with taxpayers and the tax professional community. The IRS Twitter news feed, [@IRSnews](https://twitter.com/IRSnews), provides the latest federal tax news and information for taxpayers. The focus of the IRS Twitter messages will be on easy-to-use information, including tax tips, tax law changes and important IRS programs such as e-file, the earned income tax credit and "Where's My Refund." Anyone with a Twitter account can follow [@IRSnews](https://twitter.com/IRSnews) by going to <http://twitter.com/IRSnews>.

Traveling with a Pet to the USA

If you plan to take your pet abroad or import one on your return, please review a copy of the CBP brochure Pets and Wildlife http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/newsroom/publications/travel/pets_wild.ctt/pets.pdf. You should also check with state, county and local authorities to learn if their restrictions and prohibitions on pets are stricter than federal requirements.

Importing animals is closely regulated for public health reasons and also for the well-being of the animals. There are restrictions and prohibitions on bringing many species into the United States.

Cats are subject to inspection at ports of entry and may be denied entry into the United States if they have evidence of an infectious disease that can be transmitted to humans. If a cat appears to be ill, further examination by a licensed veterinarian at the owner's expense might be required at the port of entry.

Cats are not required to have proof of rabies vaccination for importation into the United States. However, some states require vaccination of cats for rabies, so it is a good idea to check with state and local health authorities at your final destination.

All pet cats arriving in the state of Hawaii and the territory of Guam, even from the U.S. mainland, are subject to locally imposed quarantine requirements.

Dogs must also be free of evidence of diseases that could be communicable to humans. A general certificate of health is not required by CDC for entry of pet dogs into the United States, although some airlines or states may require them. Dogs must have a certificate showing they have been vaccinated against rabies greater than or equal to 30 days prior to entry into the United States. This certificate should identify the dog, show the date of vaccination, the date it expires (there are one-year and three-year vaccinations), and be signed by a licensed veterinarian. If the certificate does not have an expiration date, CBP will accept it as long as the dog was vaccinated 12 months or less before coming to the United States. Dogs coming from rabies free countries do not have to be vaccinated.

These requirements apply equally to service animals such as Seeing Eye dogs.

Dogs not accompanied by proof of rabies vaccination, including those that are too young to be vaccinated (i.e. less than 3 months of age), may be admitted if the importer completes a confinement agreement (see below) and confines the animal until it is considered adequately vaccinated against rabies (the vaccine is not considered effective until 30 days after the date of vaccination). Spanish, French and Russian translations of form CDC 75.37 are available, but must be completed in English.

Confinement agreements may be found at the CDC's Isolation and Quarantine page or through your quarantine officer at the port of entry. (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncpdcid/dgmq/index-new-sites.html>)

Dogs that are too young to be vaccinated (i.e. less than 3 months of age) must be kept in confinement until they are old enough to be vaccinated, and then confined for at least 30 days after the date of vaccination.

Birds may be imported as pets as long as you comply with APHIS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife requirements.

Advisory: Until further notice, there is a temporary ban on the importation of pet birds from countries/ regions affected with highly pathogenic Avian influenza subtype H5NI. See the Animal and Animal Product Import Information page for more information. (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncpdcid/dgmq/index-new-sites.html>)

All non-U.S. origin pet birds imported into the United States (except from Canada) are required to be quarantined for 30 days in a USDA animal import quarantine facility at the owner's expense. A reservation at the facility must be made in advance by contacting the USDA port veterinarian at one of the special ports of entry listed below. A cost estimate for the quarantine will be provided at that time. Once the reservation is made and payment is received in full for all quarantine services, the animal import quarantine facility will issue a USDA import permit (VS Form17-129). This permit must accompany the bird while in transit.

The USDA defines pet birds as those that are imported for personal pleasure of their individual owners and are not intended for resale.

Document and Quarantine Requirements:

- USDA import permit (VS Form17-129);
- Current Health Certificate issued by a full-time salaried veterinarian of the agency responsible for animal health of the national government in the exporting country of origin;
- 30-day Quarantine in an USDA Animal Import Center; and
- Fish and Wildlife Services Certification (if necessary).

USDA Quarantine Centers and Ports of Entry

All non-U.S. origin pet birds must enter the country and undergo quarantine at one of the following import quarantine facilities.

These are the only ports of entry available for importing non-U.S. origin pet birds.

New York City
230-59 Rockaway Blvd., Suite 101
Jamaica, NY 11413
Telephone: (718) 553-1727
Fax: (718) 553-7543

Miami Animal Import Center
USDA-APHIS-VS
6300 NW 36 Street
Miami, FL 33122
Telephone: (305) 526-2926
Fax: (305) 526-2929

Los Angeles
Los Angeles International Airport
11850 South La Cienega Blvd.
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Telephone: (310) 725-1970

Fax: (310) 725-9119

For additional information visit the APHIS Animal Health page.

(http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/pet_travel/pet_travel_basics.shtml)

Other common pets such as rabbits, ferrets, hamsters, gerbils and guinea pigs may be imported if they are in good health. The importation of reptiles and invertebrates is restricted; please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for additional guidance. Most species of snails are not admissible. Contact APHIS for additional information. All civets, African rodents and nonhuman primates are prohibited except for science, education and exhibition. These species cannot be imported as pets. Refer to the CDC's Traveling with Pets, Importation of Animals and Animal Products into the United States page for more information

Recent Travel Warnings/Public Announcements:

Saudi Arabia Country Information Sheet – updated October 23, 2009 –

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1012.html

Travel Warning – Saudi Arabia – issued December 23, 2010 –

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_932.html

Worldwide Caution – issued August 12, 2010 – http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4787.html

Upcoming Consulate Holiday Closures:

February 19 – U.S. Presidents' Day

Useful Contacts/Links:

U.S. Consulate Jeddah: <http://jeddah.usconsulate.gov/>

American Citizens Services, Jeddah: email- JeddahACS@state.gov

Warden Messages: <http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/service/advisories-for-americans-in-ksa/warden-messages.html>

Registration: <https://travelregistration.state.gov>

Useful Information: <http://travel.state.gov>

U.S. Consulate Jeddah

American Citizens Services Section

Public Service Hours: Sat/Mon/Tues/Wed – 1-3 pm (except US and Saudi holidays)

Tele: 966/2/667-0080, ext. 4610

Fax: 966/2/669-3078 or 3098

*After hours **Emergency:** 966/2/667-0080 ext. 0*